

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2-8 and 10-16 contain allowable subject matter.

Drawings

Applicant respectfully requests to indicate whether the drawings filed on October 25, 2001 are acceptable.

Priority Claim

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge the claim of foreign priority. The present application is a continuation of PCT application PCT/FR 00/01137 filed on April 28, 2000, which claims priority to French Patent application FR 99/05444 filed on April 29, 1999.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-16 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 9 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1 and 9. Claims 2 and 10 have been cancelled by this reply.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 2. Further, claim 9 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 10. In addition, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to add minor clarifying amendments. Finally, claims 3 and 11, which previously depended on claims 2 and 10, respectively, have been amended to depend from claims 1 and 9, respectively. No new matter was add by any of the aforementioned amendments.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,006,328 and U.S. Patent No. 5,987,132.¹ As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 2 and claim 9 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 10. Accordingly, amended independent claims 1 and 9 are now allowable. Further, pending claims 3 and 11 have been amended to depend from amended independent claims 1 and 9, respectively. Thus, all pending dependent claims (*i.e.*, claims 3-8 and 11-16) now depend, directly or indirectly, from allowable independent claims. Accordingly, all pending dependent claims are also allowable.

In view of the above, this rejection is respectfully traversed. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.


¹ The Applicant respectfully notes that the referenced application only includes 16 claims.
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Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09669/012001).

Dated: January 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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